

Senator Gary Siplin's District 19 Newsletter



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Issue No. 1



Dear Neighbors & Friends:

Thank you for allowing me to serve you in the Florida Senate. As the final days of my term in office come to an end, I want to utilize this newsletter to keep you abreast of the things that are occurring, both in Tallahassee and at home, that are of greatest importance to you.

~~~ God Bless, Gary

Reapportionment

Central Florida's demographics have changed drastically since 2000 – having become much more diverse. You've probably noticed these changes taking place in your neighborhoods, school, and churches. The changing face of Florida, though good, raises important questions about equality, especially within electoral politics.

The process of "redistricting" allows us to determine how those changing demographics will affect the way your local city council, county commission, state legislative, and congressional districts are drawn.

In an effort to ensure that your interests were protected and that you would be fairly represented by and through the redistricting process, the Florida Senate and the Florida House of Representatives hosted twenty-six joint public hearings around the state this summer to hear from people like you before redrawing the districts in this state.

Over the past three months, we have reviewed that testimony, along with more than 150 maps submitted by the public for our consideration in redrawing this State's legislative and Congressional districts.

On December 6th, the Senate Committee on Reapportionment will examine the proposed maps for the new districts, and I would love to have your input. Contact my office for information on how you can give me feedback on the proposed maps.

2012 Senate Page Program

For more than 32 years, the Florida Senate has given interested young people the opportunity to observe and participate in the legislative process. During the regular sessions of the Florida Legislature, students from across the state come to Tallahassee for one week to assist members of the Legislature in carrying out the work of the people.

During the assigned week, Senate Pages assist member of the Florida Senate by distributing materials and messages, learn about the legislative process through hands-on participation, and experience a "mock session" in which student role play as Senators and engage in debating, discussion, and voting on legislation.

Under the supervision of the Senate Page Coordinator, pages will work from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and will receive an hourly stipend that will be mailed two to three weeks after their service. Senate Pages will be responsible for their own transportation, housing and meals while visiting the Capital City. Professional dress is required.

Each Senator has the opportunity to sponsor up to two pages, between the ages of 15-18, for one week during the 60-day regular session. If you know a student who is interested in participating, please have them contact my office for an application.

By becoming a Senate Page, each student will benefit from the unique experience of working with Florida legislators, witnessing the lawmaking process and meeting new friends from across the Sunshine State.

Senator Siplin's Upcoming Events

**Look, Listen & Learn Tour with
Education Commissioner, Gerard
Robinson**
11.04.2011
Evans High School

**Lake Apopka Community
Meeting**
11.07.2011
John Bridges Center

Senate on the Street
11.11.2011
Winn-Dixie Supermarket, Apopka

Committee Meetings
11.14 thru 11.17.11
Tallahassee

**Matchmakers Conference &
Regional Summit**
11.17.2011
Lake Buena Vista

**National Save the Family Now
Movement, Inc. Million Family
March**
11.19.2011
Florida Citrus Bowl

**Lake Apopka Community
Meeting**
11.21.2011
New Destiny Christian Center

**Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for
Grand Opening of Dental
Hygiene Clinic**
11.30.2011
Sanford-Brown Institute

Priorities for 2012 Legislative Session

Committee Assignments

Agriculture, Chair

Governmental Oversight & Accountability,
Vice Chair

Higher Education, Vice Chair

Budget

Budget Subcommittee on Education
PreK-12 Appropriations

Budget Subcommittee on Higher Education
Appropriations

Reapportionment

Regulated Industries

Rules

Joint Legislative Budget Commission

Regular sessions of the Legislature typically begin on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in March and continue for 60 consecutive days; however, due to the Legislature's Reapportionment responsibilities this year, the 2012 Legislative Session will begin on Tuesday, January 10th.

This year, I will continue to focus on education issues, and particularly those that might positively impact our young black males. My goal is also to both sponsor and/or support legislation that increases employment opportunities for ex-offenders and for those who have lost jobs due to the economic downturn. I will also continue to advocate for equal opportunity in contracting opportunities with the State for our Minority-Owned Businesses. In addition, I will seek to have economic and social development funding for the Pine Hills, Parramore, and Apopka communities re-appropriated in this year's Budget.

Please know that in my office, your opinion always matters. In fact, many of the best ideas for new laws do not originate with legislators, but rather come from the people we represent.

Please contact me if you have suggestions for legislation, need help testifying at a committee hearing, or would like assistance looking up and tracking an existing bill.

Bills Sponsored by Sen. Siplin

SB 98 Education: Authorizing district school boards to adopt resolutions that allow prayers of invocation or benediction at secondary school events

SB 100 Unclaimed Deposits Held by Utilities: Requiring that any unclaimed deposits held by a utility be deposited annually to supplement the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program

SB 102 Employment Practices: Prohibiting the use of a job applicant's personal credit history as a hiring criterion

SB 222 Domestic Corporations: Providing for conversion of limited agricultural associations into domestic corporations

SB 102 Termination of Gas or Electric Service: Prohibiting the termination of a senior citizen's or low-income family's utilities during periods of extreme temperatures

SB 106 Postsecondary Student Fees: Providing an exemption from payment of non-resident tuition at a state university or Florida College System institution for undocumented students who meet specified requirements

SB 200 Limited English Proficient Students: Authorizing school districts to administer student achievement tests in a student's primary language if the student is severely limited in English proficiency

SR 300 Merry Christmas/Official Greeting for December 25: Recognizing "Merry Christmas" as the State of Florida's official greeting for December 25

SB 592 Tax Exemptions/Fresh Fruit & Vegetable

Packinghouses: Providing a tax exemption for electricity used by fresh fruit and vegetable packinghouses

SB 644 Sealing & Destroying Certain Criminal Records:

Creating a procedure for a person to seek a court order to seal an arrest record if the person is deemed factually innocent of any charge arising out of the arrest

SB 852 Healthy Foods Retail

Act: Directing the Department of Agriculture to establish a financing program to help fund projects that increase access to fresh fruits & vegetables in underserved areas

*From My Family
Staff and I:*



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